GOD CRIED

A PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF THE 1982 SIEGE OF BEIRUT
IN WORDS AND PICTURES BY TONY CLIFTON AND CATHERINE LEROY

£15.00 AVAILABLE FROM ALL GOOD BOOKSHOPS
SALES ENQUIRIES: QUARTET BOOKS LTD, 27/29 GOODGE STREET, LONDON W1P 1FD 01-636 3992

Literary Review

August INCORPORATING Quarto 70

ROALD DAHL ON 'GOD CRIED'

Frank Johnson and Home Grown Old Masters

Literary Bitching

John Lahr: Youth Leisure and Rock n' Roll

Godfrey Hodgson reads Roy Hattersley

Lord O'Neill of the Maine: Ireland North and South

the **Literary Review**

INCORPORATING **Quarto**

GENERAL
Maurice Ashley
Roald Dahl
M R D Foot
Fraser Harrison
Peter Hillmore
Godfrey Hodgson
John Lahr
Sheila MacLeod
Lord O'Neill
Mark Redhead
Philip Waller
Francis Wheen
Terence de Vere White

THE PRESS
Howard Davies

BESTSELLERS
Neil Shand

REVIEWERS REVIEWED
Susan Marling

JOURNAL OF A LITERARY CONTENDER
Cosmo Landesman

VIEWPOINT
Neil Berry

MUSIC
April FitzLyon

ART
Edward Lucie-Smith
Frank Johnson

PHOTOGRAPHY
James Lingwood

FICTION
Julian Rees
Jennifer Uglow
Lisa Israel
Nicholas Rankin
Christopher Hawtree

POETRY
George Szirtes

POEMS
Geoffrey Grigson, Gavin Ewart, James Lasdun

SHORT STORY
Carlo Gébler

Charles I 8
'God Cried' 1
Churchill 1939–41 6
Man and the Natural World 15
International Gossip 17
Roy Hattersley's Yorkshire Boyhood 4
Sound Effects: Simon Frith 14
Autobiography of Janet Frame 11
Robert Fisk on Ulster 3
Land of the Lakes 16
The English Seaside Resort 9
John Betjeman 12
Constance Wilde 10

Daily Sketch 19

What the Public Want 20

Paul Johnson's History of the World 22

Pissed Off 27

Literary Bitching 28

Liszt 29

Representations of Revolution 30
Turner and Constable 31

The Work of Atget 32

Doris Lessing 33
Robert Nye, Alice Munro 34
Esther Kreitman, Winifrid Holtby 35
David Caute, Moris Farhi 36
Milne, Benatar, Sheppard 37

Carol Rumens, David Constantine 39

..... 41

The Chekhov Student 42

Letters 18
Notes on Contributors 21
Pick of the Paperbacks 48

AUGUST 1983 No: 62

Editor: Gillian Greenwood
Assistant Editor:
Kathy O'Shaughnessy
Poetry Editor: Carol Rumens
Business and Advertising:
Bridget Heathcoat-Amory

Published monthly from:
27/29 Goodge Street
London W1P 1FD
Tel: 01-636-3992

© **The Literary Review Quarto Limited**
A member of the Namara Group

All subscription enquiries to:
The Literary Review & Quarto
Subscription Dept.,
513 London Road,
Thornton Heath,
Surrey CR46 6AR
Tel: 01-684-3157

Design: Caroline Jefford of Namara Features

Typeset by MC Typeset, Rochester, Kent
Printed by Nene Litho, Wellingborough, Northants

The Literary Review is always available in London at Quartet Bookshop, Poland Street, W1

Not A Chivalrous Affair

Roald Dahl

God Cried Tony Clifton and Catherine Leroy.
Quartet 144pp £15

IN JUNE 1941 I happened to be in, of all places, Palestine, flying with the RAF against the Vichy French and the Nazis. Hitler happened to be in Germany and the gas-chambers were being built and the mass slaughter of the Jews was beginning. Our hearts bled for the Jewish men, women and children, and we hated the Germans.

Exactly forty-one years later, in June 1982, the Israeli forces were streaming northwards out of what used to be Palestine into Lebanon, and the mass slaughter of the inhabitants began. Our hearts bled for the Lebanese and Palestinian men, women and children, and we all started hating the Israelis.

Never before in the history of man has a race of people switched so rapidly from being much-pitied victims to barbarous murderers. Never before has a race of people generated so much sympathy around the world and then, in the space of a lifetime, succeeded in turning that sympathy into hatred and revulsion. It is as though a group of much-loved nuns in charge of an orphanage had suddenly turned around and started murdering all the children.

But let me go back for a moment to the Palestine I remember in June 1941. Our squadron of fighters (or what was left of it after Greece and Crete) was stationed at Haifa aerodrome, a tricky place in those days for landing and taking off because it was so very small and had only one runway. Our planes were Mark I Hurricanes, armed with four Browning machine-guns in each wing, and all eight guns fired simultaneously when you pressed your thumb gently against a small red button located on the handle of the control-stick. Because we had so few planes, we usually went out singly or at the most in pairs, and the object was to shoot down the German JU 88's that came in from Rhodes to bomb the Navy. If it wasn't that, it was trying to protect our ground forces from being attacked by the French Moraines and Dewotines flown by the ridiculously misguided pro-Nazi Vichy-French pilots.

I flew many times up that now famous coast from Haifa to Beirut and I can still remember with absolute clarity looking down at Tyre and at Sidon from about two miles out at sea and five thousand feet up and seeing each town as no more than a tiny cluster of ramshackle houses on a rocky coastline with the blue mountains of Lebanon behind them. And many times we circled above Beirut trying to entice the Vichy pilots to come up and take us on. From the air in those days Beirut was a town of low white buildings with a small harbour, and from somewhere down there the pro-Nazi French used to shoot at us with great enthusiasm, filling the sky with puffs of grey smoke. There was a famous French Artillery School in Beirut at the time and they loved using their guns.

I will say one thing for our Squadron. None of us ever fired a single bullet over Lebanon that could possibly have hit a civilian or a non-military target. In fact once, a Sergeant Pilot called Bill Wallace and I flew out together to strafe some French planes that our intelligence had told us were parked on a landing-field three miles north of Rayak. When we came zooming in very low over the trees, we saw the French pilots and all their girlfriends (it was a Saturday evening) grouped round the planes and having a party. I remember seeing wine-bottles and glasses standing on the wing of one of the planes and there was a tall girl in a green and white dress in the act of raising a glass to her lips and she dropped her glass as we came whooshing overhead. When a plane comes in very low and fast you never hear it until it is right on top of you and then the noise is like an explosion in your face. It must have been quite a shock for those young people in the middle of a nice Saturday evening cocktail-party suddenly to hear that great smack of sound and to see two Hurricanes sweeping past twenty feet above their heads. A few machine-guns started shooting at us from the four corners of the little airfield but Bill and I circled around twice to give everyone time to get out of the way. Something that I have always treasured through the years is the picture of a wild flurry of high-heeled shoes and billowing skirts as the girls dashed towards the Operations Hut with the gallant Frenchmen shooing them on from behind. Then Bill and I went in low and shot up the six planes on the ground, wine-bottles and all. In those days, war in the Lebanon was a very chivalrous affair.

We remained at Haifa for exactly four weeks and during that time five out of our total of ten pilots were killed. But all of us at one time or another made friends with local Palestine families. I have a vision in my mind of a most beautiful country embroidered all over with line upon line of orange trees and lemon trees and fields of green wheat and small white farmhouses and people working in the fields. As fighter pilots, we never flew at night, so our evenings were always free, and the Palestinians who lived in the white houses up on the slopes of Mount Carmel just behind the aerodrome used to send messages inviting us to come and visit them after we had finished flying. We all used to go, and we found that many of our hosts could speak a little English picked up from the British who had been hanging around Palestine for years. They expressed their thanks to us for being there to protect their homeland from the Nazis, and they used to ply us with very strong black coffee and tiny sweet cakes and a dangerous yellow drink in small glasses that I seem to remember was some kind of arak.

Now why, you are asking, do I ramble on like this about the long ago past when I am meant to be discussing a book just published which is called *God Cried*? I'll tell you why. It is because I retain such a glowing memory of the Palestine I saw in those days, of the beauty of the country, of the kindness of the people and of the pride they took in their little farms, and it makes one weep to think about what has happened to it all since then.

We all know what that was. The Jews came pouring in with American money and American guns and created the State of Israel and out went the Palestinians. That part of it is already history. We also know about the doings in those days of a murderous young terrorist called Menachem Begin who was blowing up British soldiers in a campaign designed to get more territory for the Jews than treaty obligations permitted. This is the man who now screams 'terrorist' at Palestinians who fight to regain what he has stolen from them. We also know all about the wars with Egypt and Syria which need never have taken place if only Israel had stuck to her part of the bargain and been willing to share the land with those she had kicked out.

We know all that. But what we had not seen until June 1982 was a new and violently aggressive Israel whose armed forces moved into Lebanon and murdered more than 25,000 people, mostly civilian men, women and children, and severely injured

another 30,000. The pretext was to get at the PLO forces who admittedly were entrenched in Lebanon, but that was still no excuse for the deliberate mass murder by shelling and bombing of the Lebanese population.

Beirut caught it worst of all, and that is what this new book is all about. It was written by Tony Clifton, a journalist of vast experience in war reporting, and it is magnificently illustrated with heartrending photographs by Catherine Leroy who is no less experienced in her job than Tony Clifton is in his. The text and the photographs together are a terrible indictment of Israel's brutality. One finds it almost impossible to believe that a civilised people could perform such acts of fiendish barbarism upon women and children and patients in hospitals. Modern bombing techniques using computers and electronic gadgets and aerial photography enable the fliers of today to select a single building in the centre of a city and blow it up with pinpoint accuracy. The Israelis pinpointed and hit no less than thirteen out of the seventeen hospitals in Beirut, one of them a mental hospital and many of the others full of children. The authentic tales of horror and bestiality throughout this book make one wonder in the end what sort of people these Israelis are. It is like the good old Hitler and Himmler times all over again.

But to me one of the most fascinating parts of this terrifying and absorbing book is the author's theory about why the Israelis invaded Lebanon in the first place. He says:

> I have reached the conclusion that the war in Lebanon had almost nothing to do with the Palestinians or the Lebanese . . . that the destruction of half of Lebanon, the killing of 25,000 civilians and the deaths of at least 500 Israeli soldiers were the results of a diversionary action . . . Menachem Begin needed to divert the world's attention from the fact that he was taking over the occupied West Bank of the River Jordan and making it an integral part of Israel. The way he is doing this is by having his government build vast numbers of housing settlements on the West Bank and filling them with Jewish settlers, so that what was once an almost purely Arab section of the area will become as Jewish as Tel Aviv. He had to shovel those people into what he calls 'Judaea and Samaria' as fast as possible because the Americans and Europeans and the other Arabs had at last got their act together to the point at which they realized that if the Palestinians didn't get some sort of homeland soon, their howling and screaming and shooting were going to destabilize an area where a lot of the world's oil is stored. And that trio of interests had made it clear to everyone that the only logical place to have a 'Palestinian entity' was where the Palestinians already were and had always been – and that is on the West Bank. Well, someone is almost certain to notice that something's up if you suddenly start a building programme designed to house 100,000 Jews in an area as small as the West Bank. This will all be achieved in only three years . . . The cubes are spreading like herpes now, but the disease might not have started if anyone had been on the lookout for symptoms in 1982 . . . Last year, attention was fixed first on the Falklands; when that disappeared, the movement that next attracted its eye was the invasion of Lebanon. Now . . . it is far too late . . . the Lebanon invasion was a cover-up . . . the PLO left Beirut as an intact fighting force and with its entire leadership undamaged; they are already back in action . . . if Israel had really gone all-out, they would have broken into west Beirut because they commanded an overwhelming amount of firepower. But they would also have had to accept thousands, rather than hundreds, of deaths – and this they were not prepared to do . . . the destruction of the PLO was basically irrelevant to the Israeli masterplan. What they wanted was to conduct the most violent war possible while themselves taking as few casualties and as much time as possible . . . by the time this book is published, the West Bank takeover will be irreversible . . .

The author is right. The whole of the West Bank is now going going gone. In the words of Mr Yoram Aridor, the Israeli Finance Minister, 'When inflation and the cost of living index are just historical memories, Judaea and Samaria will be ours.'

During this war, the Israelis used three particularly nasty weapons – the Cluster Bomb, the Phosphorous Bomb and the Penetration Bomb. The Cluster Bomb is probably the nastiest of all. It explodes five hundred feet above the ground and saturates an area the size of a football field with white-hot pellets. These pellets go right through the body of a human. Virtually nobody who is out in the open in that area can survive. The few who are wounded all die soon afterwards because their wounds are inoperable. My own sources (I am *not* now quoting from the book) tell me that these three splendid bombs, the Cluster, the Phosphorous and the Penetration were given to the Israelis by the Americans on one condition. This was that they be used by Israel only in the direst emergency. The agreement went so far as to specify what this emergency would be. It would be in defence of her own territory, and even then only if she were being attacked by *two separate armies simultaneously*. But undertakings such as this mean nothing to the present Israeli government.

It goes without saying that the American administration must take almost as much responsibility as the Israelis for the Lebanon War. It has the muscle, if it chooses to use it, to bring Israel to its knees any time it wishes. The *Washington Times* reports that Israel has received more than half of all the aid dispersed throughout the world by the United States since 1951!

During 1983, Israel is going to get $2.5 billion of direct official US aid!

Huge Jewish charities in USA are exempt from federal tax irrespective of whether the money is used to buy bombs or not! Ninety-five per cent of all Israel's exports to USA are exempt from duties!

In other words, America is financing and controlling the most mendacious and expansionist country (apart from Russia) in the world.

But why in heaven's name did not somebody influential in America shout 'Stop!' right at the beginning of the Lebanon affair instead of sending poor Mr Philip Habib shuttling uselessly back and forth like a yoyo? Is the American President and the Senate and the Congress so utterly dominated by the great Jewish financial institutions over there that they dare not defy them? And what, pray, do those powerful American Jewish bankers think about the murdering of 25,000 people in one month? Nor can the European governments be let off the hook either. They protested. Of course they did. But how feeble those protests were. Where were the sanctions? And where was the total cancellation of all trade with Israel by Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Scandinavia and the United Kingdom? And where, above all, were the screams of protest from the millions of decent Jewish people in Europe and America? It is true that some of them expressed their horror in letters to the press. But on the whole, it seems clear that the great Jewish communities outside Israel cared very little about what was going on. One could say the same of course about the American people during the Vietnam war, and there is a strong parallel to be drawn here, but let's not get into that one now.

Happily, there is a fairly powerful political protest movement against the Begin style of government, taking place in Israel at this moment. We applaud it and wish it luck, but it represents only a minority of Israelis.

Why also, you may ask, did not the other Arab nations come rushing to the help of their beleaguered neighbour? There is a pretty good answer to that question and it is this. Firstly, they are not yet capable of taking on one of the best armed nations in the world. Secondly, they are waiting for the right moment to go in for the kill. There seems to be no doubt at all in the minds of the shrewdest Arabs in the Middle East that it is only a matter of time before all the Arab countries will rise up and annihilate the State of Israel. This may sound far-fetched to some of you. What about America, you will ask? She should never allow that to happen. General opinion is that she won't be able to stop it. And what is more, this annihilation will probably take place within the next fifty years.

How about that?

There is only one country that could prevent this inevitable holocaust and that is Israel herself. Were she to behave decently and generously to the Palestinians and to all her other neighbours, then perhaps it is still not too late for her to save herself.

Brigand nations never survive for ever. In the end, the whole world turns against them. Hitler never grasped this fact. Menachem Begin hasn't grasped it either. Mr Begin and Mr Sharon are almost the exact carbon copies in miniature of Mr Hitler and Mr Goering. They are equally short-sighted and no less bloodthirsty.

We had the Nuremburg Trials after the Hitler war. The Nazi leaders were convicted for crimes against humanity, and particularly for crimes against the Jews. It is tragic and ironic that now, only thirty-seven years later, Begin and Sharon and a number of other Israeli leaders should themselves be qualifying for the same treatment. Try them all, I say. Shove them all in the dock with handcuffs on and let us hear what they have to say in their defence.

God Cried is a terrific book. Every Jew in the world should read it. So should everyone else who has any conscience at all. The facts as reported are totally accurate and I am afraid that when you have finished reading it and have studied all the photographs you will become violently anti-Israeli. You simply won't be able to help yourself.

But then nobody of my age will ever forget how violently anti-German we all were in 1940. And yet, is it not rather wonderful that the German nation, once so hated, has today succeeded in rehabilitating itself and becoming anti-Nazi. Now is the time for the Jews of the world to follow the example of the Germans and become anti-Israeli. But do they have the conscience? And do they, I wonder, have the guts? Or must Israel, like Germany, be brought to her knees before she learns how to behave in this world?

In Time of War

Lord O'Neill

Ireland, Ulster and the Price of Neutrality 1939–45 Robert Fisk
Andre Deutsch 565pp £25

AT THE TIME of the fall of France I can remember discussing Ireland's neutrality in the Officers' Mess at the training battalion of the Irish Guards, which I had just joined from Sandhurst. The officers who came from the South of Ireland were quite convinced that when America came into the war, then Mr De Valera would seize his opportunity and that, despite trouble from the IRA, neutrality would come to an end. At the very least it was anticipated that the Americans would be offered bases from which they could control and patrol the Atlantic. These suggestions made by Catholic Irishmen proved to be quite wrong. And now, years later, we have this weighty and deeply researched tome to prove that neutrality was in the end inevitable. What is more, assuming that a conventional war is still possible, neutrality may become the respectable line for future Dublin leaders to take.

Robert Fisk, who was *The Times* correspondent in Belfast when I knew him, became deeply interested in Irish affairs, and I am not surprised that he has now written this book on Ireland. Nor am I surprised that Sir William Rees-Mogg gave him time off to carry out his investigations, as he had a high regard for Fisk before he had won his awards and become so well known. It is typical of Fisk that, not content with the dangers of a journalist's life in Belfast, he should now be living in, and writing from Beirut.

I was not in Ulster during the War and this book made fascinating reading. The muddles were ghastly; both those of the very part-time Cabinet, and even of Edmund Warnock as a Parliamentary Secretary (later a scourge of the Cabinet before and during my time), who totally underestimated the dangers of a German bombing raid on Belfast, and who returned equipment for fighting air raids sent from Britain. I had however heard from a senior civil servant soon after the War that the Government had pressed for conscription to be enforced on Northern Ireland and later realised that even prominent Protestants were against it. They were thankful in the end that London had resisted their pleas, and thereby saved them from becoming politically unpopular.

Perhaps what surprised me most was De Valera's great admiration for Chamberlain. One could understand his gratitude for the return of the treaty ports, but I was surprised at his enthusiasm for Chamberlain's disastrous European policy. Hitler's troops entered Prague on March 15th, thereby pouring scorn on all Chamberlain's efforts the previous September. Yet ten days later De Valera was at Chequers urging the Prime Minister to continue with his policy of appeasement! At the time of Dunkirk, Malcolm Macdonald, who had negotiated the handing over of the treaty ports, was sent over to Dublin to see if De Valera would move a bit on neutrality. During these conversations De Valera surprisingly suggested that there might be a case for a negotiated peace with Hitler whereby Britain might keep its Empire and Hitler would dominate Europe. Macdonald was forced to give De Valera a little lecture on the undesirability of trusting Hitler.

Malcolm Macdonald made several visits to try to sell the idea of eventual Irish unity if the South could give up neutrality, but these efforts all failed, partly because many people in Dublin thought that Hitler would win the War, and partly because all that De Valera really wanted was a united neutral Ireland.

Throughout the book one gets the impression that De Valera was frightened of the repercussions which would ensue for him and his Party if he were to follow the path of Redmond during the First World War. The outside world's impression was of a strong man who would yield to no one and, while this was partly true, he was quite willing in private to tell his British visitors that personally he might agree, but that publicly he would split his Party if he were to support the Allies.

Perhaps the most astonishing thing I noticed in the Chamberlain/De Valera discussion, as reported on page 78, was as follows: